

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

November 17, 2003 REGULAR MEETING

November 17, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mary Jo Rossetti called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 8:05 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Mayor Gay, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Sullivan Ms. Taylor, Ms. Murray and Ms. Rossetti.

Alderman O'Donovan was absent.

III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

There were no presentations made this evening.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved as follows by voice vote:

October 27, 2003:

- Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting

November 3, 2003

- Regular Meeting

Ms. Taylor amended the November 3, 2003 minutes (p. 261, second line under item #1, resolutions to be presented, as follows:

- o To allow *school departments* to keep all Medicaid reimbursements

The amended motion was approved by voice vote.

V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Student representative Maya Nitzberg reported on the following items this evening:

There may be an excerpt on the group Teens Against Dating Abuse (TADA) tonight, November 17th on the WB Channel, 10 o'clock news. On November 12th reporters visited the high school to observe the group and student, Sarah Renninger, was interviewed. The group will be talking to all teachers at the high school about how teachers can be of help to students who are dealing with issues relating to dating abuse, including guiding them to resources.

This week there are mandatory singing and dancing workshops for the students participating in the musical *Cabaret*, and the auditions for all roles will be held on Thursday and Friday, November 20 and 21.

V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (cont.)

November 16th was the first meeting for all students interested in indoor track.

Tryouts will be held at the beginning of December for all students who are interested in boys and girls basketball.

The hockey cheerleaders will be sponsoring a fundraiser at UNO's restaurant in Porter Square, Cambridge on November 18th. All are invited to attend. There will be students at the door distributing coupons. Twenty percent of the proceeds benefit the hockey cheerleading team.

The Thanksgiving Rally is next Wednesday, November 26th.

Update: Structured English Immersion Program (SEIP)

Ms. Nitzberg reported in the last week she has talked to some school staff associated with the Structured English Immersion Program about the idea of the student forum. At this time there is no definite date or plan but there is a general sense that the teachers involved think it is a good idea to talk to their students about this subject. Ms. Nitzberg will be reporting back to the students when she has more details, as well as talk to other school staff involved with the program. There have been many requests to have the discussion take place at the high school as the students feel more comfortable in their own environment. Ms. Nitzberg reported she would talk to the school committee separately concerning the specifics of the student forums.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. Informed student representative Maya Nitzberg that a letter went out to all students and was also put in the November 13th Somerville Journal regarding guidance services offered to students, staff and parents affiliated with the Somerville Public Schools. Mr. Charles O'Donnell is the gentleman performing this study and assessment. Dr. Argenziano asked that Ms. Nitzberg share this information with other students, as they will be receiving a copy of the notice distributed last week. Focus groups and interviews will take place through December 2003. Listed in the letter are key responses to questions and anyone wishing to respond to the school department may do so by:
 - Parent Information Center – 1060 Broadway (drop off or mail)
 - FAX to Somerville School Department at 617-625-4731
 - E-mail directly to Charles O'Donnell, Consultant at odathanson@aol.com
 - Main office at each building site will have drop off
2. Provided to members is a copy of the SIMS (Student Information Management System) October 1, 2003 Report. The district total percentage is 54% second language vs. 46% all white students. This information is the official document submitted to the State Department of Education.
3. Enclosed is a copy of the results of the summer reading, as provided by Ms. Ripley.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)

4. Three letters from the Department of Education are provided to members:

The first letter commends the Vocational Technical Education Department for their dedication and commitment to the students and the community; recognizes Mr. Puopolo, Auto Mechanics Teacher, that through his efforts the Prevent Blindness Massachusetts organization has donated 600 pairs of safety goggles to Somerville High School students; acknowledges National Denim Day, an outstanding community service project, for raising funds for cancer research and applauds the great work of teachers Marilyn Camello, Grace Kennedy, Stella Apostolakos, Charles Gerlach, Constance Filosi, Richard Brunett, Gerald Derosier, Laurie Foley and to the students for their dedication, commitment and generosity.

The second letter is a congratulation letter received regarding the Parent-Child Home Program, which we partner with Somerville Early Head Start. The proposal submitted has been approved for funding in the amount of \$40,000.

The third letter is a congratulation letter received regarding the Early Childhood Mental Health Project. The proposal submitted has been approved for funding in the amount of \$45,000. Dr. Argenziano thanked Pamela Holmes, Supervisor of Early Childhood Education/Title I, and Candyce Dostert, Grant Writer, for their work on these two grant proposals.

5. Provided to members is a copy of the memorandum sent to the SEIP/ELL Program staff regarding Extended Team Meetings/Study Group with meeting dates listed for the year.
6. Dr. Agenziano briefly discussed the grant *A World of Difference*, sponsored by the Anti Defamation League, a program at the Powder House Community School coordinated by Amy Parrish and Elizabeth McKenney, who are trained mediators in training students to be mediators at the Powder House Community School. The Educator Action Planning and Implementation program breakdown, consisting of fourteen points, is provided through Dr. Jenkins' office and is enclosed for members information.
7. The Superintendent applauded Mr. Joseph Mastrocola, Coordinator of Instructional Technology, Ms. Ann-Marie Fiore, Instructional Technology Facilitator, and Danielle Heanue and Jay Teixeira, Technology Education Teachers for putting together the *Technology Ticker*, a four page technology newsletter. Dr. Argenziano pointed out and read aloud the nine different Web Resources for Parents, which are listed on page three of the newsletter.
8. Provided to members is the Educational Research Newsletter on mathematics instruction and an article from the New York Times on the English fluency mandate.
9. The Bi-Annual Awards Ceremony will be held Monday, November 24th at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Somerville High School.
10. Provided to members is a letter with enclosures, received from Representative Patricia Jehlen, concerning several topics. Dr. Argenziano thanked Representative Jehlen for her response to the Somerville School Committee regarding the Dilboy Field petition as well as a number of other items she presented to the committee.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)

Adding to the Superintendent's mention of Representative Jehlen, Ms. Murray suggested inviting her to a future Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting to discuss budgetary items and to also update the committee on the Special Education Law.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. *Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee:* (Ms. Bauer) Nov. 5

Ms. Bauer reported on the following subjects discussed:

- The committee met with Mr. Charles A. O'Donnell, Consultant for Guidance Services, who will be helping the school department to evaluate and revise the guidance services. She briefly discussed the plan he presented to the committee which he has already begun implementing. It includes evaluation of the program, evaluation of the personnel, and evaluation of the results.
- Elementary block scheduling. Ms. Bauer explained what this refers to is that each elementary school should have in place a comprehensive block schedule to provide for several lengthy periods of instruction in English Language Arts and Mathematics as well as Science and Social Studies. Over the course of the next month the four curriculum coordinators are visiting each elementary school to observe classrooms, meet with Principals, and talk with teachers to ensure that the teachers are able to effectively use the longer blocks of time devoted to the various subjects.

B. *Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee:* (Ms. Bauer) Nov. 12

Subjects discussed:

- MCAS Update (03) –

Ms. Bauer reported on the MCAS Update given by Mr. Francis Russell, K-12 Coordinator of English and Mr. Larry Iamello, K-12 Coordinator of Mathematics, who both praised the work of high school teachers Mr. Mingle and Ms. Rooney. They have been coordinating the services for high school students who need extra help to pass the MCAS. All juniors and seniors who have not yet passed both required sections of the MCAS test are currently enrolled in MCAS preparation courses and these students are getting the necessary support from experienced teachers. Ms. Bauer thanked the many teachers who are involved in helping our students to prepare for the test.

Also discussed was services and preparation in the elementary schools. The elementary math scores have not been as high as expected. As a result the committee discussed increased monitoring of mathematics teaching, and possibly the need for more professional development in other supports so that all teachers can become better at teaching mathematics.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)

C. Finance and Facilities Subcommittee: (Ms. Murray) Nov. 17

Subjects discussed:

- End of Year Report Summary

Ms. Murray gave a report on the End of the Year Report of Instructional Expenditures, a very lengthy document submitted to the State Department of Education. The report includes all the revenues and all the expenditures that are incurred on the school side. Ms. Murray briefly discussed the update given by Superintendent Argenziano and Ms. Ferrari regarding additional discussion that took place between the school department and the city in terms of our net school spending.

Informed the public that the School Committee members will be meeting with the Board of Aldermen on Wednesday, November 19th at 6:30 p.m. to discuss additional funding for two teachers that the committee sees as a necessary and immediate need, one at the high school and one at the Powder House Community School. The meeting will be held at City Hall in the Board of Aldermen Committee Room. All are invited to attend.

- Format of FY05 Budget

Ms. Murray reported the second item on the agenda *Format of FY05 Budget* was not discussed during this evening's Finance and Facilities meeting due to the time constraint of the meeting. This item was tabled until the next meeting.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business for this evening's meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. SHS Summer School Graduates

Mr. Thomas F. Galligani, SHS Headmaster, recommended that the following students, who have successfully completed summer school and have earned the required credits, be granted a SHS diploma. Approved by voice vote.

Claiton Jorge
Orlando Jacquet
Christopher Homan

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Harris

1. The Personnel Committee of the Whole Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 19, 2003 to discuss the annual performance evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools has been postponed to Tuesday, November 25, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. at 181 Washington Street, 3rd

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

floor conference room. Following brief discussion and no objections from school committee members, the time of the meeting was changed to 7:30 p.m.

2. Reported that the girls swim team did participate in the sectionals. Even though they did not place high enough to go on to the State Competition, they did set a new high school record. Ms. Harris congratulated the girls.

Mayor Gay

1. Reported she had the pleasure of visiting the West Somerville Neighborhood School to read to a third grade class. Mayor Gay mentioned a lot of people across the city are concerned about the class sizes in our schools and she wanted the community to know that the class she visited today had thirteen students.
2. The Mayor previously sent out a request for people to sign a petition concerning Dilboy Field. She informed the community she received hundreds of pages of petitions signed by parents and individuals across the city and has sent this to the Governor's office. To date she has not had a reply, but she will be following up on this matter.

Ms. Cardoso

1. Remembered our teachers and non-teaching staff this week *American Education Week, November 17 – 21*. Ms. Cardoso expressed her thanks to everyone in our schools who do a fine job all year, putting their time and effort forward to make our children extra special each and every day.
2. The Lincoln Park Community School is still having their Thanksgiving Food Drive and Ms. Cardoso reminded the public that anyone wishing to donate non-perishable food items, may do so by bringing them to the school.
3. The Lincoln Park Community School PTA meeting will be held this Thursday, November 20th at 6:30 p.m.
4. The Track PAC Annual Craft Fair will be held on Saturday, November 29th at the Eugene C. Brune Field House from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Ms. Murray

1. Mentioned that the *Somerville Cares About Prevention* program recently received a \$75,000. grant. Ms. Murray stated even though she will not continue as a member of the school committee she still feels a great connection to this group and asks that members continue to participate in the meetings and continue to support the incredible work that is done by all of the people involved in this program.
2. Informed the community there will be a forum at the Capuano Early Childhood Center on Thursday, November 20th at 6:00 p.m. to discuss holidays, how to handle holiday celebrations in the classroom as well as within the school.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Ms. Taylor

1. Reported to members the events that took place at the Massachusetts Association of School Committees Convention held last Wednesday, November 12th. Ms. Taylor informed the committee the eight resolutions that were presented all passed, including the three that had to do with funding, as discussed at last week's meeting. Ms. Taylor also brought members up to date on the discussion that took place regarding the Charter School expansion.

Mr. Sullivan

1. There will be a forum held at the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center. Discussion will be between parents and teachers on how the holidays should be celebrated in the school. Mr. Sullivan commended Principal, Frank Ferraro, for being proactive in this matter.
2. Wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Ms. Bauer

1. On November 26th Somerville High School is going to have a freshmen college experience panel. Being the mother of a current college freshman, Ms. Bauer thinks it is wonderful for the current high school seniors to be able to talk about this major transition in their life.
2. Holiday pies are still available. If interested, the Culinary Arts Department is still taking orders until Wednesday, November 19, 2003.

Ms. Rossetti

1. The West Somerville Neighborhood School PTA will be held this Wednesday evening, November 19th at 6:30 p.m.
2. The West Somerville Neighborhood School is also hosting a Family Night this Friday, November 21st, for Kindergarten – Grade 5 students and parents. There will also be a dance going on in another part of the building for Grades 6 through 8.
3. Reminded the public that the School Committee is meeting with the Board of Aldermen on Wednesday, November 19th, at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall in the committee room. Ms. Rossetti encouraged the public to attend this meeting.
4. The Somerville High School Track PAC will be hosting a Holiday Fair on Saturday, November 29th from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Eugene C. Brune Field House. Ms. Rossetti invited the public to attend and mentioned this is a great place to begin your holiday shopping. She also thanked the businesses involved for supporting this program and informed the community that the funds raised benefits the cross country and the indoor and outdoor track teams. While shopping during the craft fair there will be holiday greeting cards available for the public to sign, which will be sent along to a Track Team alumni who is serving in Iraq. Ms. Rossetti urged as many people possible to join in the signing of the holiday greetings.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

5. Wished good luck to the Somerville High School Football Team and encouraged the community to join the Gridiron Club on Thanksgiving morning for breakfast. This is a good way to show support for our student athletes.
6. Wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

The Superintendent added to Ms. Rossetti's mention of the high school football game and informed the public the game is at Arlington and the breakfast is at 8:30 a.m.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Argenziano informed committee members that the State Department of Education has been drafting the field trip policy regarding out of state field trips, for liability purposes, and has sent a paradigm for the committee to view. The Department has asked all Superintendents to present to their school committee this draft policy, which centers around safety and security. Dr. Argenziano added this item to the December 4, 2003 Rules Management Committee of the Whole Meeting agenda in order to approve this request made by the State Department of Education.

XII. PERSONNEL

Complete report submitted to members. – Received and placed on file.

School Committee members were notified and accepted the following personnel actions of November 17, 2003 as follows:

A. Retirement

1. John McGowan, 27 Ashley Drive, E. Bridgewater, MA 02333 (Carpentry Teacher @ SHS) effective December 5, 2003. (29 years)

B. Resignation

1. Linda P. Earnest, 152 Wright St., Arlington, MA 02474 (Paraprofessional @ Kennedy) effective November 21, 2003.

C. Adoptive Leave of Absence

1. Mary Jane Weinstein, 72 Freemont St., Lexington, MA 02421 (LAB Director/SPED, Kennedy School) on or about December 1, 2003.

D. Child Care Leave of Absence

1. Susanna Stossel, 581 Mt. Auburn St., #5, Cambridge, MA 02138, (Grade ¾ Choice @ Healey School) from October 29, 2003 for the remainder of the school year.

XII. PERSONNEL (cont.)

E. Unpaid Leave of Absence

1. Manjit Kaur, 293 Summer St., Somerville, MA 02144 (Cafeteria Helper) from November 5, 2003 to December 17, 2003.

F. Authorizations

Healey School

Grade 3 Teacher
Effective October 30, 2003
Vice: S. Stossell (MLOA)

Kaleen Moriarty
14 Chandler St.
Somerville, MA 02144
Cert. # 385633 (Elem 1-6)
Salary: M, Step 1 = \$34,701

Kennedy School

SPED Paraprofessional
Effective 11/17/03
Vice: A. Sperry (resigned)

Nancy Siff
59 Elm St. #1
Somerville, MA 02144
Salary: \$13,299

Special Education

SPED Paraprofessional
Effective November 5, 2003
Vice: R. Sakaria (resigned)

Janet Desrochers
29 Moreland St.
Somerville, MA 02145
Salary: \$13,299

Community Schools

21st Century Site Coordinator
effective October 20, 2003
Funding Source: 21CL04

Mayra Axner
30 Evergreen Ave.
Somerville, MA 02145
Salary: \$20 per hour

Athletics

Head Coach – Female Basketball
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$4,278

Brian Harris
9 Melville Rd.
Somerville, MA 02145

JV Coach – Female Basketball
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$2,740

Kathleen Norton
100 Wallace St.
Somerville, MA 02145

XII. PERSONNEL (cont.)

Fresh Coach – Female Basketball
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$2,480

Stephen Gangemi
10 Sachem Rd.
Peabody, MA

Head Coach – Male Basketball
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$4,278

Paul Garrity
106 Josephine Ave.
Somerville, MA 02144

JV Coach – Hockey
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$2,740

Joseph Vilaine
24 Hazelwood St.
Hingham, MA 02043

Head Coach – Hockey
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$4,278

David Liberatore
391 Rice Ave.
Revere, MA 02151

Head Coach – Swim
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$3,604

Michael Williams
12 Solar Rd.
Billerica, MA 01821

Head Coach – Female Track
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$4,278

Charles O'Rourke
91 Glencoe St.
Brighton, MA 02135

Asst. Coach – Female Track
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$2,740

Yolanda Ortiz
3 Mt. Pleasant Ct
Woburn, MA 01802

Head Coach – Male Track
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$4,278

David Dickerson
4 Atwood St.
Wakefield, MA 01880

Asst. Coach
2003/04 Winter Season
Salary: \$2,740

Carl Stauffer
29 Green St.
Melrose, MA 02176

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary